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2. — *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Sir Robert Peel.* By SIR LAWRENCE PEEL. London : Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts. 1860. 16mo. pp. 314.

THOUGH Sir Lawrence Peel was a near kinsman of the subject of this memoir, he claims, and we think justly, to be "free from those disturbing causes, arising from family and party connection, which too often convert the biography of a statesman into a panegyric and a satire." Younger by several years than the great man whose life and character he commemorates, and having had little direct intercourse with him,—trained in a different political school, sedulously devoting himself to the study of the law to the exclusion of all political ambition, and passing the last ten years of Sir Robert Peel's life in a remote part of the empire,—he has written with a degree of impartiality which no one perhaps could have attained who stood in closer personal relations with his kinsman, or who mingled more largely in the turmoil of party warfare. He does not, indeed, add anything to our knowledge of Sir Robert Peel; he corrects only one or two unimportant mistakes of previous writers, while his own narrative is singularly deficient as to details,—even the dates of Peel's birth and death being omitted; and his style is often turgid and inelegant. But he writes with great candor and moderation; and even as to those disputed points on which there is room for a difference of opinion, we gladly recognize the fairness of his arguments. On not a few questions he dissents from the policy of his kinsman, and inclines toward the Whigs; and on these topics he does not hesitate to express his views with great frankness. At the same time he never fails to do justice to the rectitude of Sir Robert's intentions. To persons who are already familiar with the facts of Sir Robert's life, the volume will be welcome, as a judicious estimate of his character and principles, rather than as a satisfactory biography.

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3. — *A Second Series of Vicissitudes of Families.* By SIR BERNARD BURKE, Ulster King of Arms, Author of "The Peerage and Baronetage," "The Landed Gentry," etc. London : Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts. 1860. 12mo. pp. 438.

THE papers in Sir Bernard Burke's new volume are shorter and more homogeneous than those in his former collection, though his plan is the same in both volumes. The subjects now examined are drawn for the most part from Irish and Scotch biography, and they present many very curious and striking illustrations of the reverses of family

fortune, which are nowhere more conspicuous than in the history of the hereditary nobility of Great Britain and Ireland. Sir Bernard's researches appear to have been confined within a narrow range; but they have made him familiar with many curious details which seldom fall under the notice of the student of history, and his new volume is scarcely less interesting than that which preceded it. His style, indeed, is the style of an antiquary, rather than that of a graceful essayist; and his attempts at "fine writing" are often of a painful and ludicrous character. Though his volume teaches, in a very impressive manner, the insecurity of all earthly possessions, few persons will have recourse to his pages on account of any felicity of statement in them. It is as a repository of significant facts that his volume claims notice; and no one will close the book without bringing away some new or striking anecdote, however much he may regret that it was not narrated in a more polished and vigorous style.

Among the families and individuals whose various fortunes are described are the Bonapartes, the Laws of Lauriston (of whom was the celebrated financier), the De Veres, Earls of Oxford, the Prime Minister Ward, and the old Countess of Desmond, who is said to have lived to the age of a hundred and forty years. Besides these names, all of which are more or less familiar to American readers, there are fourteen or fifteen other titles; and in all of the sketches the reader will find striking instances of the vicissitudes of fortune.

4. — *The Works of CHARLES LAMB.* A New Edition. Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee, & Co. 1860. 4 vols. Small 8vo.

THIS is the most convenient and elegant edition of Lamb's Works which has been published, either in England or in this country, and it leaves nothing to be desired in respect to typographical beauty, or any other essential characteristic of a good library edition. It includes the Life and Letters, and the Final Memorials of Lamb by Talfourd, the Essays of Elia, Rosamund Gray, and Lamb's miscellaneous writings, with a few unimportant exceptions; and it has a well-engraved portrait. Few writers of this century have enjoyed a larger measure of popularity, or have had warmer admirers, than the author of Elia. His courageous life under the shadow of a great calamity, his genial criticisms, and his quaint humor, have given him a place in the affections of cultivated readers of both sexes wherever the English language is spoken; and it cannot be doubted that the Essays of Elia and some of his miscellaneous prose pieces will hold a permanent place among Eng-